

Abnormal Behavior Experienced By Lux Lisbon In *The Virgin Suicide* Movie

Rebana Adawiyah

English Department, Faculty of Humanity, Diponegoro University, Semarang 50275

Abstrak

Film The Virgin Suicide adalah sebuah film tentang kehidupan sebuah keluarga di Machigan. Keluarga ini seperti keluarga pada umumnya dan terdiri dari ayah, ibu dan lima orang putri. Tetapi yang berbeda dari keluarga ini adalah cara mereka mendidik anak yang terlalu ketat. Anak-anaknya berada dibawah pengawasan ibunya, sehingga pergerakan mereka terbatas.. Hal itu membuat anak depresi dan menyebabkan mereka mempunyai prilaku menyimpang seperti yang dialami oleh Lux Lisbon.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui betapa pentingnya kebebasan untuk anak dan prilaku menyimpang apa saja yang dialami oleh Lux Lisbon beserta penyebabnya.

Hasil penelitian menunjukan bahwa Lux Lisbon mengalami tiga macam prilaku menyimpang. Pertama, Lux mengalami Substance Use Disorder yang dapat kita lihat dari kebiasaanya merokok diam-diam. Selanjutnya, dia juga mengalami Psychosexual Disorder dimana Lux sering ganti pasangan untuk memuaskan hasratnya. Dan yang Terakhir adalah Lux mengalami Affective Disorder dimana dia melakukan bunuh diri untuk mengakhiri semuanya karena dia sudah tidak tahan dengan kehidupannya. Semua ini dia lakukan untuk meringankan kecemasan dan depresi yang dia alami akibat pengekangan dari orang tuanya tersebut. Dari sana bisa kita lihat bahwa kebebasan seorang anak sangatlah penting karena mereka juga adalah manusia yang mempunyai hak untuk merdeka dan menentukan hidupnya sendiri.

Kata kunci: keluarga, prilaku menyimpang, pendidikan, kebebasan, *The Virgin Suicide*.

1. Introduction

People always find conflicts and problems in their life. Life is hard. It always changes and keeps moving every time. People live with struggle with a purpose to achieve happiness, but in the journey, they meet some obstacles to get it. Some people can

overcome it but the others get stuck in it. Sometimes they who are not strong enough can use the wrong ways to solve their problems. They also can get suppressed and depressed or even suffer from psychological problems.

People with psychological problems usually act in an uncommon way.

They have abnormal behaviors. They do something that is not supposed to be done. Their actions break the norms or values which prevail in the society. They also can damage other people around them.

There are normal behavior and abnormal behavior. It is extremely difficult to distinguish between the normal and the abnormal. The normal behavior is common behavior of people, whereas, abnormal behavior is behavior that is inconsistent with our expectations. The individual cannot cope with his environment in the same way that most people can (Silverman, 1971: 538). We can assume that abnormal behavior is about people's emotion, cognitive and behavior problems.

The important thing that forms our behavior is the condition of family life. When the condition of family is good and harmonious, the children will grow well; however, when the circumstances of family is not harmonious, it will make the psychological development of children become not good and can make them frustrated and depressed. The children can do unexpected things such as having free sex, drinking alcohol, smoking, and committing suicide. Durkheim explains about suicide as a condition:

“Where there is slight integration of individual into family life, the greater the destiny of the family the greater immunity of individuals to suicide. The individual characteristics of the spouses are unimportant in explaining the suicide-rate; it is dependent upon the structure of the family and the rules played by its member” (1951:14).

There are many kinds of abnormal behavior that happen in The United States of America as we have seen in the American movie, such as drinking alcohol, having free sex, smoking, and committing suicide. The number of teenagers with abnormal behavior in America is increasing for example in the case of suicide. Buzan and Weissberg in Stenager and Stenager (1998: 1) estimate that “in 1988, in the United States 30,407 deaths were due to suicide”. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for teenagers. It is claimed by Stenager and Stenager (1998:1) “every third death among those aged fifteen to twenty four years caused by suicide”.

The writer finds a suitable case of this abnormal behavior in *The Virgin Suicide* movie. This movie shows how family life can affect children's development. The influences of parent's educations make their children have some abnormal behavior. Moreover, the children have unsuitable attitude to the society. This movie can serve a very good source to understand about abnormal behavior.

2. Methodology

The writer uses method of library research in analyzing the topic. Library research means reading some supporting books and searching for the additions from internet sources. The information from those sources is written information dealing with the topic that is discussed. The writer looks for the data from the library and book stores to support the topic in this thesis..

Method of approach is a reference in looking at an object. In this research paper, the writer uses the exponential and psychological approach. In the study of *The Virgin Suicide* movie, the writer uses the exponential

approach to analyze the intrinsic aspect of the movie. According to Guerin (1992:197), exponential approach deals with the inclusiveness of the term to suggest at once the several meanings of motif, image, symbol, and archetype. This approach describes implicit meanings in a play or film which is represented by the motifs, symbols, images and basic patterns. While in dealing with analyzing cinematography of the movie, the writer uses the cinematic elements.

Furthermore, to review the extrinsic aspect, the writer uses psychological approach to literature, especially abnormal behavior as sub unit of psychological. According to Silverman (1971: 2) states "psychology is the science that seeks to measure, explain, and sometimes change the behavior of man and other animals". In this case, Lux Lisbon does many abnormal behaviors such as smoking, having free sex, and committing suicide. This is particularly relevant to the object of study; the writer wants to raise the influence of family life against abnormal behavior experienced by Lux Lisbon.

3. Literary Review

In analyzing a film, literary review is absolutely necessary to base the assessment process elements contained in it. Elements of a literary review be divided into two parts. The division is intrinsic and extrinsic elements.

3.1 Intrinsic Aspects

Intrinsic aspects include character, setting, and conflict. while cinematic aspects include camera shot and sound. According to Potter "Characters are basic elements in

much imaginative literature and therefore they merit the considerable attention paid to them (1967:1)." Setting is the context in which the action of a story occurs (Meyer, 1990: 107). Conflict is a clash action, desire, ideas, or goals in the plot of a story or drama (Perrine, 1988: 1408).

3.2 Extrinsic Aspects

3.2.1 Abnormal Behavior

In order to measure the abnormal behavior that is illustrated on the movie, it is necessary to understand about the definition of abnormal behavior. It is difficult to give definition of abnormal and normal behavior. It depends on the context. Generally, normal is associated with positive value and abnormal is associated with negative value.

"Abnormal behavior is behavior that is inconsistent with our expectation, the individual cannot cope with his environment in the same way that most people can. Abnormality is a condition that prevents an individual from functioning effectively as effective behavior is defined within his society" (Silverman, 1971:539).

Abnormal behavior was defined as behavior that is maladaptive (cannot adapt with condition) or destructive for the person or for his social environment (Altrocchi, 1980: 4).

3.2.2 Classifications of Abnormal Behaviors

The American Psychiatric Association's current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual mental disorders (DSM III) provide the major classifications of abnormal behaviors. Some of them are substance use

disorders, affective disorders, and psychosexual disorders.

3.2.2.1 Substance Use Disorders

It is defined as psychological dependence on mood or behavior altering drugs such as alcohol, cocaine, nicotine, and *etc.* problems in this category usually center on impairment of social or occupational functioning and inability to stop use of drug (Coon, 1983: 461).

A drug is chemical substance, other than food, that alters physiological. Drugs can affect mood, feeling, thinking, or behavior, and that many produce an altered state of consciousness. Misuse of drugs is addressed to the use of psychoactive drugs by individuals in an effort to achieve particular psychological state or to relieve a number of kind psychological distresses such as depression, frustration, *etc* (Altrocchi, 1980: 522). In this research, the writer only analyze about misuse of nicotine.

Nicotine is one of the psychoactive drugs that people take primarily to feel more alert, more energetic, and more capable; by far the most commonly used and misused stimulants in United States (Altrocchi, 1980: 539). In this movie, Lux Lisbon is a secret smoker to relieve her stress.

3.2.2.2 Psychosexual Disorders

It includes gender identity disorders, transsexuals, and wide range of deviations in sexual behavior. It also includes a variety of psychosexual dysfunctions such as sexual desire or sexual responses; one of them is swinging couple (Coon, 1983: 462).

Some people engage in a great deal of sexual activity with many different

partners. In the context of today's freedom of sexual expression, such behavior is not uncommon, and many people consider it perfectly normal. (Altrocchi, 1980: 467).

Swingers as they called themselves are using sex as an escape from feelings of alienation. Swinger may be sign of greater honesty and flexibility, or it may be sign that trust-fear conflicts are very prevalent in today society (Altrocchi, 1980: 481). In this case, Lux Lisbon is a swinger. She often changes her partner for having sex.

3.2.2.3 Affective Disorders

It involves disturbances in mood or emotion in affective disorder individuals. In include hyperactive, euphoric, maniac, or may be depressed. In either case, extremes of mood are intense or long lasting. Person with affective disorders maybe have psychotic symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, or other loss of contact with reality. Depressed individuals run high risk of suicide. (Coon, 1983: 461). The example of affective disorders is destructive behavior. It suits with Lux Lisbon case.

A self-destructive behavior threatens or harms one's psychological in extreme, it threatens one's life. Suicide continues to engender intense and ambivalent feelings in many people. An attempted suicide is a suicidal act that does not result in death. And a completed suicide is a suicide; act that does lead to death (Altrocchi, 1980: 585-587). The Lisbon girls are commit suicide. They died in the end of the story.

3.2.3 The Cause Factors of Abnormal Behavior

There are some causal factors of abnormal behavior, there are:

1) Biological Factor

It includes brain dysfunction. It composed of precipitous, repetitive, and maladaptive behaviors that interrupt the individual's life style (Altrocchi, 1980: 625).

2) Psychological / Psychogenetic factor

It is the psychological factors of individual such as stress, anxiety, loneliness, *etc* (Altrocchi, 1980: 626).

3) Situational, social, and cultural factor

Situational, social, and cultural factors evidently can produce extreme abnormality in individuals and groups who have no apparent biological or psychological predispositions. It's certain and dynamic relation with individual can cause certain mental disorder or abnormal behavior. The condition of environment such as war, famine, epidemic, *etc* in its relation with individual can create symptoms of personality disorder (Altrocchi, 1980: 628).

4) Interaction among factors

The combination of Brain dysfunctions and other biological factors, psychological problems, provocative situation, and socio cultural can lead abnormal behaviors (Altrocchi, 1980: 631).

4 Analysis

In analyzing *the Virgin Suicide* movie, the writer connects the intrinsic elements of this movie with the theory of abnormal behavior.

4.1 Abnormal Behavior on Lux Lisbon

Normal people will act properly base on the values and norms in society,

but what Lux Lisbon do in this movie is completely abnormal. Abnormal behavior as we have discussed before is behavior of someone who can adapt with the condition. Generally, it associates with the negative value. Lux action is maladaptive, because she cannot cope with her will. She tries to solve her problem with wrong solutions. She damages herself. She does something that was not usually done by common people. She commits suicide to solve her problem. Besides that she also a secret smoker and free sex lover.

4.2 Misuse of Nicotine

Adolescence is the time to find identity in which she wants to hang out with friends and get to know the world, but her mother does not think so. She considers that she has to keep her from the temptations of the outside, so she limits their movements. Therefore, Lux Lisbon has abnormal behaviors because of that such as smoking.

Nicotine, which is explained before, it includes in the substance use disorders. It is used to relieve a number of psychological distresses such as depression and frustration. Smoking is the one way to relieve stress. In this case, Lux experiences stress because her parents are overprotective; therefore Lux starts smoking behind her parents because if her parents know, they will be mad at her.

4.3 Swinging Couples

Swinging couple is one of the psychosexual disorders which are a form of abnormal behavior, as explained before. Swingers, as they call themselves are use sex as an escape from feelings of alienation. Swinger may be signs of greater

honesty and flexibility, or it may be signs that trust-fear conflicts are very prevalent in today society (Altrocchi, 1980: 481).

Lux is different from the other sisters. She has a high sexual desire. We can see from the way she dressed. She often wear a mini dress, so Mrs. Lisbon admonishes her frequently. This shows that she has a higher sexual desire than her sisters.

Mrs. Lisbon : *Lux, please, put your shirt on this instant.*

Lux : *Sorry.*

Mrs. Lisbon : *Thank you, dear.*

(The Virgin Suicide, 00:07:32 - 00:07:43)

Besides that she also has the most beautiful face among the sisters, so there are many boys who like her in the school. They want to go out with Lux, including Trip Fontaine that was finally chosen by Lux.

Boy 1 : *Let me tell you, she's the hottest girl in the school for sure.*

Boy 2 : *Do you wanna know what happened? Smell my fingers, man.*

(The Virgin Suicide, 00:33:24 - 00:33:31)

Trip falls in love at the first sight. Trip starts to approach Lux. They are in a relationship. They often meet at the school and sometime, Trip comes to Lux's home. Lux gets high supervision from her mother when Trip is at home.

Mrs. Lisbon feels worried about Lux. Hence, she keeps paying attention to Lux when Trip comes. Mrs. Lisbon sits between Lux and Trip, so Lux cannot close to Trip. Parents generally will not act very much like that, even if they feel worried, but they are not going to interfere too deeply. They only advise and give a great trust and

responsibility to their children. Therefore, their children will be responsible for themselves and their families. However, what was done by Mrs. Lisbon is the opposite, she does not believe at all to Lux and her daughter affairs. This makes the children uncomfortable. Rather than to maintain, it can actually make children rebel and do things that are not desirable.

One day, Trip asks Mr. Lisbon to invite Lux to go to school's homecoming party. But Mr. Lisbon does not allow it because Lux has sisters. Trip says that he will take a bunch of boys to homecoming party to accompany Lux's sisters. Finally, Mr. Lisbon allows him.

Trip : *I'm here to tell you that my intentions for your daughter are honourable.*

Mr. Lisbon : *What... might those intentions be?*

Trip : *I wanna ask Lux to the Homecoming dance.*

Mr. Lisbon : *Trip, why don't you sit down for a minute? You see, my wife and I have certain rules. They've been the same for the older girls. I can't change them for the younger ones. Even if I wanted to, the wife wouldn't let me. True. So, uh. If you want to come over and watch TV again, that would be fine, but you cannot take Lux out, especially not in a car. So I'm sorry, son, that's just our policy.*

Trip : *OK, sir, what if there was a bunch of us guy and we took all your daughters out in a group and we had 'em back by whatever time you said?*

Mr. Lisbon : *You're a good-looking fellow, Trip. Lots of girls would go with you, I bet.*

Trip : *Yeah, well, I'm not interested in lots of girls, sir.*

Mr. Lisbon :*I'll take it up with the wife, Trip. Do what I can.*
(*The Virgin Suicide*, 00:44:18-00:46:01)

After the party, they go to the school field and have sex there. When Lux sleeps on the ground, Trip leaves her alone in the next morning. She is alone when she wakes up. She comes home with the feeling of regret.

Trip : *I walked home alone that night. I didn't care how she got home. It was weird. I mean, I liked her, I liked her a lot, but out there on the field...It was just different then. That was the last time I saw her. You know, most people will never taste that kind of love. But at least I tasted it once, right?*
(*The Virgin Suicide*, 01:02:44 - 01:03:14)

When she arrives home, Lux and her sisters get a punishment from Mrs. Lisbon. They are not allowed to go out of the house even to go to school. They are isolated at home alone. That is when Lux begins frequently changing partners and doing free sex on the roof of her house during the night which is seen by the neighbor boys.

The Narrator :*This was the time we began to see Lux making love on the roof with random boys and men.*
(*The Virgin Suicide*, 01:06:00-01:06:05)

Lux try to escape from the problem; it is with swinging couple. She does free sex on the roof of her home at night after her parents sleep. The Neighbor boys often see Lux do that, they watch Lux from the window of their house. Lux does this act as a form of rebellion against her mother. Because she cannot leave the house, she frequently invites boys and do free sex.

4.4 Self Destructive Behavior

Self-destructive behavior or we can call suicide is included in the affective disorders. Suicide continues to engender intense and ambivalent feelings in many people. All of Lisbon girls commit suicide, it include Lux. The first who attempt suicide is Cecilia, but she fails. She receives treatment from a doctor. Doctor advises Mrs. Lisbon to not curb them. Finally, Mrs. Lisbon invites some boys to her home. However, it does not change Cecilia. In the end she remains to commit suicide. The pictures below show when Cecilia commits suicide in the middle of party.

After the incident there are many developing news that aim at the Lisbon family. However, it does not change Mrs. and Mr. Lisbon. They remain over protective of their children. The climax is when Lux comes home late after a homecoming party. Mrs. Lisbon isolates all of her daughter at home. It makes The Lisbon girls frustrated. The entertainments they get are only magazines and television.

The Narrator :*The girls' only contact with the outside was through catalogues they ordered that filled their mailbox with pictures of high-end fashions and brochures for exotic vacations. Unable to go anywhere, the girls traveled in their imaginations to Siamese temples or passed an old man with a leaf broom tidying a moss-carpeted speck of Japan.*
(*The Virgin Suicide*, 01:11:29-01:11:52)

The Lisbon girls try to contact the neighbor boys. They want to ask for help. The Lisbon girls try to send a signal by the lamp light to them. They

also send cards and call the neighbor boys for help.

The Narrator : *From five they had become four, and they were all living in the dead, becoming shadows. We'd have lost them completely if they hadn't contacted us.*
(*The Virgin Suicide*, 01:12:50-01:13:00)

One day, Lisbon Girls ask the neighbor boys to take them away from home. At the time set, neighbor boys come to Lisbon's home and meet with Lux Lisbon who is smoking. Lux orders them to enter home, while she will go to the garage to prepare the car. When the neighbor boys in the house, they find the massive body is hanging on the roof and the body lying on the floor. They immediately run out of the house.

The Narrator : *We would never be sure about the sequence of events. We argue about it still. Most likely Bonnie had died while we were waiting in the living room, dreaming of highways. Mary put her head in the oven shortly thereafter. Therese, stuffed with sleeping pills, was gone by the time we got there Lux was the last to go.*
(*The Virgin Suicide*, 01:20:41-01:21:08)

4.5 The Cause Factors of Lux Lisbon's Abnormal Behaviors

Although there are some cause factors for someone's abnormal behavior, in Lux Lisbon's case, the clearest factor that causes this abnormality is psychogenic factor. Psychogenic is her psychological condition, especially here is Lux's stress. It associates with the psychological problem. She was stressed because her parents who were over protective to her.

She lives under pressure from her parents. Her home is like a jail for her, because her mother isolates her and prohibits her to go out even for going to school. This case is when Lux starts to be abnormal by smoking, swinging couple, and committing suicide to relieve her stress.

5 Conclusion

The Virgin Suicide tells a story about the children that can't stand with the mother's restriction in the family life. The mother is very strict and put the children under her supervision. It makes the children stress and the result is the children have abnormal behaviors. For example is Lux Lisbon. She has abnormal behaviors such as smoking, swinging couple, and committing suicide because her parent's restriction.

The writer analyzes the abnormal behavior of Lux Lisbon and the cause factor of that. In conducting the analysis, the writer employs abnormal behavior theory as a branch of psychology theory. The writer uses classification of abnormal behavior from The American Psychiatric Association's current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual mental disorders (DSM III) to classify abnormal behaviors that experienced by Lux Lisbon.

The result is Lux Lisbon experiences three types of the abnormal behaviors, there are substance use disorder. This is when Lux becomes a secret smoker to relieve her stress. The second is psychosexual disorder. This is where Lux often changes her partner for doing free sex or we can call it with swinging couple. The last is affective disorder. It is when Lux commits

suicide to end everything includes her life to solve all of her problems.

The writer also analyzes the cause factor of Lux's abnormal behavior and the clearest factor that causes her abnormality is psychogenic factor. Psychogenic is her psychological condition, especially here is Lux's stress. It associates with the psychological problem. She becomes stress because the parents who are over protective to her. However, unfortunately, her mother does not realize what she do to her daughters. She thinks that what she do is right until all of her daughters dies.

This case teaches us to be wise against children, because children also have their own life. The parent's duty is only to teach them and give them big responsible, so they will learn and be responsible to their life.

References

- Abrams, M.H.A *Glossary of Literature Forms*. The United States of America: Non, Rinehart and Winston, 1957.
- Altrocchi, John. 1980. *Abnormal Behavior*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
- Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. 2008. *Film Art: An Introduction*. New York: Mc. Graw-Hill Companies
- Coon, Dennis. 1983. *Introduction to Psychology, Exploration and Application*. Minnesota: West Publishing Company.
- Durkheim, Emile. 1951. *Suicide, a Study in Sociology*. Illinois: The Free Press
- Guerin, Wilfred L.et.al. 1992. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New York : Oxford University Press.
- Meyer, Michael. 1990. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*. Boston: Bedford Books St. Martin Press.
- Monaco, James.2000. *How To Read A Film*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oxford Learners Pocket Dictionary*.New York: Oxford Press. 2005
- Perrine, Laurence. 1988.*The Story Structure, Sound, and Sense (Rev. Edition)*. New York: Harcourt.
- Pooley, Robert C, and Jesse Stuart.*Outlooks Through Literature*. Illinois: Scott Foresman and Co, 1968.
- Potter, L. James. 1967.*The Elements of Literature*.New York: The Odyssey Press
- Silverman, Robert E. 1971. *Psychology*. New York: Meredith Corporation.
- Stenager, Elsebeth and Nylev and Egon Stanager. 1998. *Disease, Pain, and Suicidal Behavior*. New York: The Haworth Medical Press